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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 001465

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR WHA/AND L. PETTRONI, AF/S M. TABLER-STONE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/25/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [BL](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA TO ASSIST BOLIVIA ON CONSTITUTION,
ENERGY

REF: A. PRETORIA 0537

[1](#)B. LA PAZ 1060

[1](#)C. TRENKLE-PETRONI EMAIL OF 3/8/2007

Classified By: Political Counselor Raymond Brown. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. See para 10.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY. During the Bolivian Vice President Garcia Linera April 10-12 visit to Pretoria, South Africa agreed to provide advice to Bolivia on the ongoing constitution drafting process. Bolivia will send a delegation to South Africa May 14-18, and South African experts will travel to Bolivia June 4-8. The two countries also agreed to meet in June to discuss technical minerals and energy issues, such as policy development and capacity building. The ruling ANC party also said they would assist MAS transition from a movement to political party. The DFA officials who met with Garcia Linera were impressed by the Vice President, finding him charming and intelligent. Garcia Linera privately acknowledged the serious challenges facing Bolivia, and hinted at his frustration with President Morales. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)3. (C) Bolivian Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera met with his South African Government (SAG) counterpart Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka during his April 10-12 visit to South Africa. The two agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation on constitution-drafting and energy. Department of Foreign Affairs Director for the Andean Community and Cuba Annelize Schroeder (protect) told PolOff April 19 that Garcia Linera's visit went "very well," with both the SAG and GOB committed to deepening the bilateral relationship. Besides Mlambo-Ngcuka, Garcia Linera met with SAG Speaker of the National Assembly Baleka Mbete and DepForMin Sue van der Merwe.

Constituent Assembly

[1](#)4. (SBU) Garcia Linera requested South Africa's assistance with the ongoing Bolivian Constituent Assembly (CA), according to Schroeder. Garcia Linera told Mlambo-Ngcuka that the deliberations were slow, and that their new target date for completing the draft constitution was December 2007. A Bolivian delegation, including members of the CA and MAS political party, will visit South Africa May 14-18. The SAG Parliament, led by Speaker Mbete, will host the delegation.

While the focus of the visit is constitution-drafting, they will also discuss land, energy, health, economic, and education issues. Garcia Linera also expressed interest in how South Africa manages the relationship between the various spheres of government (local, provincial, and national). A SAG delegation, made up of individuals who were involved in South Africa's 1994-1996 constitution building process, will visit Bolivia June 4-8. Speaker Mbete will likely lead the SAG team.

Minerals and Energy

15. (SBU) The SAG and GOB also agreed to strengthen cooperation on minerals and energy issues. A joint technical committee will likely meet in July to discuss policy development, capacity building, "value addition," promotion of small and medium-sized businesses in the mining sector, and investment opportunities.

Bolivia to Open Embassy in South Africa

16. (C) Garcia Linera reiterated Bolivia's commitment to open an embassy in South Africa before the end of 2007. The first South African-Bolivian Joint Consultative Mechanism (JCM) will likely take place around the embassy opening. Schroeder said it remains unclear who would participate. The Bolivians would like the JCM to take place at the presidential level, but Department of Foreign Affairs officials are pushing for meetings at a lower level, such as Deputy Foreign Minister.

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ANC to Help MAS

17. (C) In addition to his SAG meetings, Garcia Linera also met head of ANC International Affairs Mavivi Mayakayaka-Manzini and ANC advisor Ebrahim Ebrahim. This meeting followed an ANC trip to Bolivia January 31 to February 8, led by ANC Secretary General Kgalema Motlanthe (Ref C). Ebrahim told PolOff that Garcia Linera asked for ANC assistance in transforming MAS from a movement to a political party. Ebrahim was pleased that the SAG had taken up the task of aiding Bolivia with its constitution-writing, since it would have been difficult and expensive for the ANC to organize this assistance.

Bio-Note on Garcia Linera

18. (C) Schroeder, who spent considerable time with Garcia Linera throughout the visit, had a positive impression of the Vice President, finding him charming, thoughtful, and intelligent. SAG Deputy President Mlambo-Ngcuka was so impressed with Garcia Linera that she may add Bolivia to her planned Latin American tour in July/August 2007. Garcia Linera asked insightful questions throughout the visit. While his leftist/socialist leanings came through from time to time, Schroeder found him more pragmatic than dogmatic. She said that Garcia Linera openly admitted that the GOB faced serious challenges, and hinted several times that he was frustrated with President Morales.

Comment and Action Request

19. (C) COMMENT. While the SAG has no direct interests at stake in Bolivia, they continue to be intrigued by the Morales/MAS story which they believe mirrors, in some ways,

their own anti-apartheid struggle. While the interaction between the two governments had lagged for several months following Minister Essop Pahad's visit to Bolivia in July 2006, the Garcia Linera visit appears to have reenergized both sides. The SAG cannot resist requests to provide advice on constitution drafting, as they are proud of their lauded experience in drafting a new, nonracial constitution in 1992-1996. The SAG will take the exchange of visits on constitutional issues seriously and, we believe, will provide solid advice to the Bolivians, including on the importance of reconciliation and outreach to all affected populations. END COMMENT.

¶10. (C) ACTION REQUEST. If Embassy La Paz or WHA has English-language materials about the Constituent Assembly, particularly from independent think tanks who largely reflect our views, please send such materials to Post, so we can quietly pass them to key SAG and ANC officials. South Africans know little about Bolivia, and we expect that few, if any, speak Spanish. Providing key interlocutors with English-language materials on the situation might help shape SAG/ANC thinking as they approach the exchange of delegations on constitutional issues. END ACTION REQUEST.
TEITELBAUM